The Government has recently announced reduction in licence fee for NLD/ILD service licensees from 1st January, 2006. This is expected to reduce cost of Broadband services and is expected to result in increase in Broadband subscribers.

Connecting villages through satellite phones

905. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to link over 14,000 inaccessible villages in remote areas of the country by the end of 2007 through satellite phones;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Government have earmarked Rs. 105.72 crore to be spent in the next two years for this; and

(c) if so, the number of identified villages in each State for this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rs. 159 crore has been earmarked for this activity for the years 2005-06 and 2006-07.

(c) A statement indicating the number of identified villages in each State proposed to be connected via satellite media is given in the Statement.

Statement

Statement indicating the number of identified villages in each state to *be connected via Satellite Media*

SI. No 1	Name of the States 2	No. of villages 3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	115
2.	Assam	279
3.	Chhattisgarh	88
4.	Himachal Pradesh	275
5.	Jammu & Kashmir	465
6.	Jharkhand	1,694
7.	Madhya Pradesh	443
8.	Maharashtra	496

1	2	3
9.	North East-I	578
10.	North East-ll	1,289
11.	Orissa	4,899
12.	Rajasthan	18
13.	Uttaranchal	3,544
	TOTAL:	14,183

Setting up of mega semi-conductor fab in Andhra Pradesh

906. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested Central Government for setting up of mega semi-conductor fab in Andhra Pradesh and further requested for equity contribution for the project to boost the potentialities of chip making and to develop hardware capabilities in the field of Information Technology;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has made a request to the Government of India to facilitate setting up of a semi-conductor manufacturing industry in the country. The State Government agreed to provide land and other infrastructure support to such industry proposed to be set up in Andhra Pradesh. The State Government has further requested that in view of the strategic importance of semi-conductor industry and its role in boosting the Indian chip making and hardware capabilities, Government of India may consider to provide an equity contribution and a part of infrastructure investment for establishing the Semi-conductor Fab.

The Department of Information Technology has received similar requests for setting up Semi-conductor Fabs in India. They have been informed that at present the Government of India does not have a policy to provide equity financing.